

Public Hearing on Nuclear Waste Proposal  
 Thursday, October 21, 1999  
 Georgia International Convention Center  
 902 Sullivan Road, College Park, Georgia 30337

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## Statement to the Department of Energy

1... I speak as a citizen of Georgia in saying that I oppose shipping nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain, Nevada because this plan means that at least 2,500 shipments of high-level nuclear waste will pass through Georgia over the next 30 years. Five separate waste shipment routes will pass through the city of Atlanta. This lethal waste will pass by homes, hospitals, water and food supplies, and schools. The tracks through Decatur are a few feet from Agnes Scott College, Renfroe Middle School, and Decatur High School where my two children are students. Thirty years of nuclear waste shipments past our schools and other vital community resources will have an impact. Concerns include incidental radiation exposure, accidents and leaks. Few emergency personnel are trained or equipped to handle these potential dangers.

1 cont.

2 The Department of Energy projects that a nuclear waste transportation accident leading to a small release of radioactive material in a rural area would contaminate a 42 square mile area, require 460 days to clean up, and cost \$620 million. Department of Transportation records indicate that in a 10-year period there were almost 100,000 transport accidents releasing hazardous materials and causing 114 deaths and 356 major injuries.

It is simply not worth the risk to our communities, especially since time is on our side. There is time to consider alternatives. Additional on-site storage space is available at or near reactor sites through the use of dry cask storage, which is safe for up to 100 years according to the nuclear industry. This alternative would allow time for new and safer technologies to be developed for better handling of nuclear waste. This would allow time to identify a suitable location for permanent nuclear waste storage. Yucca Mountain with its history of earthquakes, water movement, and possible magma pockets is not a suitable location.

3 In summary, I ask the Department of Energy to pull back from the precipitous plan to launch massive shipments of nuclear waste through my community and communities like mine in 43 states across the country. Pull back from sending this deadly substance to a place that cannot contain it. Pull back and take the time we are so fortunate to have to reflect, study, and develop a plan that is truly safe and responsible.

Thank you.



Bobbie Wrenn Banks  
 Parent and Community Leader  
 139 Candler Oaks Lane  
 Decatur, Georgia 30030